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ABSTRACT

When the English teacher understands his "place" as being an "office" that he holds in relation to his students and the lives they live with their language, he will abandon the abstract and often irrelevant "domains" of English and avoid repeating in the classroom what culture has already done for the students. As he intervenes in their education, the English teacher should avoid attempting to protect language purity or to hammer out an academic understanding of the disciplines of language, literature, and composition. Instead, he ought to give students an understanding and control of those linguistic structures they cannot absorb elsewhere. Because students cannot master logic and writing simply by existing, the English teacher's office is to teach the written language. He should understand and appropriate the recent discoveries in the differences between oral and written language and in the systems and psychology of logic. He should encourage his students to be judged by their peers, and he should provide written lessons in inductive logic for elementary children and in deductive logic for adolescents. (JB)

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The Domain of English: What the Schools Can Do, and What Culture

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It seems to me that we as English teachers have, across the last three decades, been looking for a formula which would make us good teachers and good professionals, which would define the task we have to do. In the 1930's and 1940's, we were told that the formula was the four language arts; what we were to do was to teach the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We were told that we were to address ourselves to teaching these areas by working with the bottom of the experience cone, working in concrete situations, where students would be actually doing reading, writing, speaking and listening. We were to simulate the kinds of situations in which they might speak, write, read, and listen in the great world outside the classroom. Now there is nothing particularly wrong with this definition of what the English teacher does, except that it seemed to leave us a very vague kind of domain. It seemed that the job of the English teacher was to do everything and yet to do nothing; any language was OK, any situation in which language was used seemed to be the appropriate domain of the English teacher. The language textbooks which came out in the 1930's and early 1940's—indeed, some of the textbooks which are still coming out from the more conservative publishers—include units on writing courtesy cards. Why? Because writing courtesy cards involves writing. They include units on telephone conversation. Why? Because conversing on the telephone is speaking. This logic would also allow for lessons in conversation, conversations at the dinner table, at the kitchen sink after dinner, and for study in the art of "conversing with your brother after you have gone to bed in the evening." By the early 1950's curriculum scholars began to ask, "Why these particular situations? Why the courtesy card situation and not the love letter?" "Why these particular skills and not all skills?" And then they begin to say with a certain cogency, "If all linguistic situations and skills are the English teacher's proper domain, then he has no domain. 'When the world is your province, nowhere is home.'" What characterizes us as human beings and what characterizes practically all human activities is the fact that we use language in the situations in which we find ourselves. As J. L. Austin remarks, we do things with words rather than with physical pressure.

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A. The Trivium

In the late 1950's and early 1960's came a kind of rebellion against the language arts conception. The new generation (I was part of it) was to come in and set things in order: the chaos of the 1930's was to be fixed by the men of the 1960's. We said that we would bring to the English curriculum a rigor which it had not previously known. We said that there was such a thing as a subject matter called English. The way in which we knew the subject was that we as University scholars studied that subject matter; we knew that others—students from the lower orders—could study what we studied and as we studied. English was no longer a matter of teaching skills: it was the teaching of a body of scholarship. The formula to which we turned was a fourmula which was announced a very long time ago by T. R. Lounsbury of Yale. In the *Atlantic Monthly*, early in the twentieth century, he wrote "The study of English is the study of language, literature, and composition."

This formula came to be particularly appealing to the men of the late 1950's and the early 1960's because we could see the lower schools as doing something analogous to that which we university scholars were doing. Since there were philologists and linguists in university departments of English, courses in the history of the English language, linguistics, grammar and so forth at the university, we assumed that similar courses would be an appropriate study for the elementary and secondary schools. The courses in English literature and American literature of the departments of English of the country, courses in literary analysis after the manner of Brooks and Warren, were to be imported into the high school. And then there was the uneasy feeling that there must be something more which the English teacher should do or had to do: society was hiring English teachers to teach people to "write well." No one knew what writing well was; everyone knew that the cause of writing well was the cause of the English teacher which paid off in the market place. And we had in our universities a kind of study which once flourished in the secondary schools but which had since died: the study of rhetoric. The study of rhetoric had a flourishing scholarly and grammar school tradition in England and the United States in the nineteenth and eighteenth centuries, but the old rhetorics had been thrown out and in their place had been substituted composition books and, as we saw it, all kinds of mushy substitutes for a proper academic discipline. So Rhetoric seemed to be the ideal third party in this *ménage á trois*. Rhetoric too had its university scholars. Indeed there had been a great revival of the study of rhetoric under such persons as Mr. Karl Wallace, Mr. Wilber Howells, and Miss Rosamund Tuve. Distinguished university scholars were burrowing around trying to discover

how writers in the great ages—the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, or the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, depending on the scholar—had profited from the study of Latin and Greek rhetoric, Ramistic rhetoric or the various Renaissance and post-Rennaisance English imitations of the Latin and Greek rhetorics. Now the school and university study of rhetoric was essentially until the nineteenth century a study of Latin rhetoric. There was a popular tradition of English rhetoric, represented, in Shakespeare's time, by the rhetoric of Mr. Puttenham who rewrote standard Latin rhetorics, pouring English terms and examples into them. Indeed, Latinate English rhetoric is a much older study in the English speaking world than is Latinate grammar—almost two hundred years older (1500's vs. 1700's). Latinate rhetoric bears about the same relationship to the actual practice of persuasion in English that Latinate grammar bears to the structure of English. Neither is very strictly descriptive of our conventions though both may suggest what it is like to describe conventions indigenous to our tongue. The speech and English departments of the country thus were very much encouraged by the movement toward a revival of rhetorical scholarship as part of historical literary criticism. If great writers in other ages had learned to write by studying ancient rhetoric, could not great writers be nourished on the same rhetoric in our schools? Here we had formed our grand trivium of *language, literature,* and *composition*—composition defined as rhetoric in the classical sense.

We knew now that we could stop the Gothic hordes which were coming down on us. We in the Departments of English were supremely confident that the Departments of Education which, as we saw it, had stood for thirty years for ignorance, undiscipline, and unscholarliness, were going to be thrown back into the outer darkness where they belonged. We were going to set up permanent barricades to keep them out. Our newly found trivium had a certain neatness to it, an air of authority and antiquity. There had been after all a *trivium* for the study of the verbal arts in the medieval curriculum of the schools around twelfth century Paris which developed into the first university, a triad which was preserved more or less intact in the grammar schools and universities through the middle ages and into the Renaissance. Now our new generation, new Renaissance men as we imagined ourselves, were offering a return to the old—the tried and true ways of *academia.*

I hope that I have characterized the vanity and limitations of our hopes and great expectations. The trivium concept was given currency by the Basic Issues conference in 1958. It was reinforced by the report of the National Council of Teachers of English called *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (1961). It was reinforced further

by the Commission of English "Position Paper" of 1961. In 1961, the Nebraska Council of Teachers of English published a thing called *A Curriculum for English*, which gave support and specific suggestions for a *trivium* curriculum. In 1962-3 the "Commission of English" of the College Entrance Examination Board spent several million dollars on institutes for English teachers, which trained them in the three areas of *language, literature,* and *composition*. Most of the Project English Centers of the country conceived of our discipline as a *trivium* discipline based on college scholarship (as have the NDEA Institutes since).

By 1963, it looked as if we had won the battle. We stood on the Purgatorial mount ready to be seized by the divine eagles or angels who would bear us to the lands of federal money and power. Then, unfortunately, just as we were about to take possession of our infallibility and power, other voices were heard—disquieting voices. Some people said "that trivium isn't right—the study of English is the study of English." At first, they sounded to us like some of the characters in *Alice in Wonderland*. But they continued "That is, we mean to say—harumph—that the study of English is the study of English as a language; if you will only but press hard enough on the study of English as a language, its structure, its dialects, its history, its capacity for patterning, and so forth, you will come to understand English in all of its forms. You will come to understand English literature, English composition, and the language itself." This view has been argued with particular articulateness by the Minnesota Project English Center. Harold Allen would argue that all language phenomena—anything that can be communicated through the English language, can be fruitfully seen through the lens of the modern study of linguistics and language science. Other disquieting voices raised themselves; the elementary teachers and Elementary Education departments were being noisy. They were saying, "But really, there is a body of knowledge in the area of reading; reading is not simply a skill. We have a body of research, as sophisticated, as well reported, as any research concerning which we have knowledge. This information concerning the English language and how it is learned can not be excluded." The Nebraska Curriculum Development Center held a conference a couple of years ago concerning institutes for the training of the elementary teachers in English, and we felt obligated to include a fourth area: reading.[1] Other dissidents began to say, "When you speak of rhetoric, you English people, what you mean is written rhetoric, you mean the handling of the wirtten language. Of course, we speech people own rhetoric too—not the handling of the written language but the persuasive handling of the oral. And if modern linguistic science tells you English people anything, it tells you that there is a

significant difference between the written and the oral language." And then there were two rhetorics. The game of English became the game of cutting up the pie in new ways; the great seal of the Wisconsin Curriculum Study Center (you may have seen their publications) includes a square with a triangle inside it: reading, writing, speaking and listening surrounding language, literature and composition. And then there were seven disciplines. I am trying to suggest that we can continue to draw these kinds of diagrams setting forth schematic abstract pictures of our domain until the great Apocalypse comes. Such diagrams and the rationalizations which go with them will not make us better teachers of English. Indeed our whole faith in the conception that we could really "find our field" in terms of the characteristic activities of college scholars and scholarly fields may have been a mistake. I do not mean to say that everything which has been done in the last five years is wrong: I am not repudiating what has been done in the Nebraska Curriculum Study Center or at any of the other study centers. But our work is valuable insofar as it is *particular*. The faith that an abstract definition of academic area will do anything for teaching is a limited faith. The medieval *trivium* was, after all, not language, literature, and composition—it was grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. Medieval people had a sense that they had come as close to the truth as we felt we had by speaking of language, literature, and composition. And in some senses they had; but they subsumed the study of literature under the study of grammar and rhetoric. Their ancient model was really not our model at all. And medieval people felt an accurate and logical handling of the language to be quite as important as an understanding of linguistic structures or persuasive strategies: dialectic or logic was one of their three areas. Why should logic be excluded from the triangles which we drew?

It is not true that the formula *language, literature,* and *composition* will keep us from losing ourselves in areas which are not relevant to the handling of the mother tongue or its understanding. A teacher who has the faith that teaching only language, literature, and composition will save him from irrelevancy can lose himself—as a teacher of literature—in the study of history; he can lose himself in the study of archeology or of biography. The study of language can easily be turned into a study of symbolic logic, as transformatist study is presently turning it. It can very easily be turned into the study of psychology.

Rhetoric, since it involves the study of the persuasive uses of writing, in fact of every conceivable kind of situation, can gather to itself almost every conceivable kind of intellectual discipline.

We thought that we had drected a dike against irrelevancy and

Gothic ignorance. We had erected a sieve.

And the most disquieting voice of all was the voice which said that the foumula was sterile. We were said to have found a kind of "Platonic substance" to go with the substantive 'English'—an idea existent in the ideal scholar's intellectual heaven but one irrelevant to kids. Or we were said to be taking college knowledge and packaging it for elementary and secondary kids without concern for its relevance to the language behavior of children or, and this was more damaging, to their understanding. The charge may have been unjust; but if we claimed to do anything, it was to impart understanding. That case did appear in the evaluation of the institutes sponsored by the Commission on English in which teachers had taken the college courses which they had had in institutes and replicated them in the school classroom, delivering a series of sterile college lectures to their high school students without changing the content of the lectures at all or their rhetorical *ethos* did not help matters much. But if there is sterility in the *trivium* formula, it lies not in the formula; it lies in the incapacity of any abstract formula defining 'field' to provide for excellent school teaching.

B. The "Office" of the English Teacher

Our thought about our domain may be less pedantic, less strictly academic—it may more meaningfully inform our planning for teaching and our acts of teaching—if we speak, and think, of ourselves as having an *office* in relation to students and the life they live with language rather than a domain. If we conceive of ourselves as having an office, we must see ourselves as doing something for students. We do something for students, however we teach English, whatever the curriculum, whatever the conception of domain which sustains it. We intervene in the child's language life. Any kind of classroom teaching is somehow intervening in that life, and generally with the hope of reshaping it. Now what justifies our intervention? It is not the case, of course, that English teachers always have existed to intervene. English teachers are a very recent creation; they may disappear from the scene again and perhaps there would be fewer to mourn than we think, for English teachers as we know them did not exist in the Western World in any formal sense, prior to the last part of the nineteenth century: English literature was not taught to native speakers in either the colleges or the secondary schools until late in the nineteenth century: the people who taught English rhetoric in earlier periods largely did so outside the regular school curriculum. English grammar was not pushed until the late eighteenth century as middle class boys sought to acquire the 'King's English.' Indeed, the first serious push for English studies came in the late seventeenth century and from scientists of the Royal Society who wished to

make space in the curriculum for physical studies and to reduce the time spent on the verbal arts at Oxford and Cambridge by substituting native English for studies of the classical Latin and Greek verbal arts. Shakespeare did not learn the English language from an English teacher.

When our children come to school, they know the English language. Linguists—notably Martin Joost—who have studied children's language assert that children six years old have available practically all the structures which are indigenous to their dialect: I would agree if the remarks are confined to the oral form of the dialect. Children have 'absorbed' or internalized these structures and the rules for forming them by listening. The period in which a child learns most of the oral structures of his own language is the period from fifteen months to three and a half years. If the schools wish to intervene in a profound way in the oral language life of a child, they had better get children to school at the age of fifteen months. If the school's conception of its job is a conception which requires that the teacher suppress what he considers to be illiterate dialects and substitute for these dialects something 'nicer' or closer to NBC *lingua franca*, then the schools had better begin advocating bringing kids into school at the age of fifteen months.

If the child *knows* his language when he comes to school, what is it we teach? We intervene. And you say, "At least our intervention doesn't do any harm." But it may. There are research studies which show that some kinds of teacherly intervention may cut out of the student's linguistic repertory—his written repertory at any rate—forms which are useful to him. Douglas Porter did research at Harvard studying children who were sitting in the presence of prescriptive teachers and subjected to the 'dont's' which we profess. The kids began to play it on the safe side. They used a more limited vocabulary because they might commit a malapropism. They used a more limited syntactic repertory because they might commit an indiscretion involving a disagreement between a subject and its verb. Exposure to an English teacher does not necessarily enhance one's handling of the English language. Some people most secure and imperially at ease with the mother tongue are rendered inarticulate with fear in the presence of "the English teacher" lest they commit a bobble. Other people are just folks; English teachers protect a purity.

If we are to intervene with any countenance of right, we must do so to give students a capacity to understand and control those linguistic structures which they cannot automatically absorb from their linguistic milieu. This may mean learning to understand forms of the language which are part of the distant past or to speak the dialect of a culture distant from their own. It may mean learning forms of the English

language accessible only to the highly professional master of English prose. Most importantly, it involves learning to master the written language. People do not learn to read and write simply by existing; they do learn to speak and to listen. No country has ever achieved even 90 per cent literacy without a system of public universal education. The purpose of our study of the *language* is to enable us to know how our language communicates as a system, how it works and has worked as a code, and where our own language fits into the history of the language generally—to understand ourselves as speaking creatures; the purpose of the study of *literature* is to encounter and conquer Polyphemus first at one depth and then at a greater depth that we might better understand the Polyphemus in ourselves; we do not go to these two areas to be 'changed' so much as to 'learn' whatever the changes which learning may produce. But the study of composition is primarily concerned with performance and not with understanding: the general public thinks of us as creating a kind of performance. Since composition performance at the most primitive level—the capacity to form letters—hardly exists without our ministrations, it seems probable that we *do* create the performance here though whether it be that which the general public thinks of us as creating is a moot point. It may be that we can only secure excellent performance by *beginning with understanding*; if we fail to secure excellence of performance, we shall be indicted as having failed as English teachers. It is the written language which 'culture' does not teach, that portion of the language peculiar to writing which is the domain of the schools and which has been since Roman times.

C. The Office of the English Teacher: The Written Language

And how shall we secure a meaningful excellence in the handling of the written language. We trivium makers, said "Rhetoric." Now I think Rhetoric is a subject which does not really exist for English-speaking peoples. Go back and read Aristotle's rhetoric. It is a great book, designed to teach speakers how to speak; it teaches lawyers how to persuade, men who celebrate great heroes how to celebrate them, and men who speak in great assemblies how to persuade those assemblies. But the situations which Aristotle describes are situations which do not exist in his sense for us; the relationship between the speaker and his audience which he describes no longer exists; the psychology which he attributes to old and middle aged and young certainly doesn't square with the experience of a society rendered endurable by medicine and secure by insurance policies. His rhetoric's enthymemic logic is a logic which is as alien to technological culture as is Latinate grammar to the English language; finally, his description of what constitutes good style is a description based on his analysis of excellent Greek prose wroters and

poets—excellent for Greeks—but not a description of the practice and art of English prose writers and poets. Almost all modern rhetorics written prior to 1962 were simple dilutions of Aristotle's rhetoric—and often of the least relevant parts. What I am suggesting is that if we are to have a new rhetoric, it must be new—it must be as new as the new grammar is. Our society has created certain situations in which men speak analogous to those which existed in Greek society but we have not analyzed the psychology of those situations beyond the little and superficial work which Marshall McLuhan and some of his likes have done. Conventions bind audience and artist together—consider the rhetorical conventions of an Alfred Hitchcock thriller—in our society too; we have not analyzed them. New systems of logic have arisen with the rise of science and of symbolic logic; very fine descriptions of the development of children's logic have been developed by Jean Piaget and others; very fine tools for the analysis of the logic of anyone's handling of ordinary language by modern British philosophers; we have not used them. All of these developments have had very little effect upon the English teacher's conception of the way in which he can teach kids. They have made their mark on science and math teachers. Sophisticated English prose style, the kind of style which you find in the *New Yorker,* the *Atlantic Monthly, Harpers,* and so forth, can be analyzed as to syntactic patterns, stylistic configuration, and lexicon—one can do for it what Aristotle did for Greek prose. Consider the researches of Pike, Becker, Young, Ashida, Hunt, and Mellon. We have not been much affected.

The school has the obligation to teach the student to handle the letters which represent sounds; the linguist can tell us something about the relationship between sounds and letters in the English spelling system (cf. Ralph Williams' *Phonetic Spelling for College Students*). Any serious elementary teacher, anyone concerned with spelling, would be well advised to put himself through a course in phonology which would clarify the relationship between the sound and writing systems of English.

The school has an obligation to teach the student to handle the kind of syntax which characterizes the written as opposed to the oral language. The two are different even for the best of speakers. Mr. Eisenhower when he was president of the United States came in for a good deal of bashing about for the clumishness of his syntax (people published various transcriptions of Eisenhower sentences which never ended), but Mr. Kennedy, who was an exceedingly articulate man, spoke sentences which were no more shapely when he was speaking in press conference. None of us speaking aloud speak sentences which are

shapely from the perspective of the decorum of the written language; our sentences are mazes; written down without editing, they become monsters in which there is no agreement between noun and verb, between pronoun and referent. We speak a language which makes very little use of parallelism of syntactic structure to mark the conceptually similar or 'equated'; we do not write such a language if we are professionals. Appositive structures and non-restrictive clauses are standard forms of the written language—not so of the spoken. Students have great difficulty handling pronominal sequences when they write, and why? Because control of the pronoun is not a difficult matter in conversation. If I don't understand the reference of your pronoun when you are speaking to me, you will see it on my face immediately, and you will fill in the noun to which the ambiguous pronoun refers as my face darkens or goes blank. But the written language may require that one handle a pronominal chain which extends across half a page and more and keep all of the referents straight. The spoken language very seldom uses the lower levels of the multi-level sentence (as Francis Christensen speaks of these levels) which give a written sentence a kind of density and compression. Certain signals, phrases or structures, tend to be signals of paragraph opening and closing and to function as such for the experienced writer. You will believe my assertion that written English is not spoken English in syntax, lexicon, or discourse structure if you will tape yourself, and type up the tape. Analyze your speaking, sentence for sentence. Lay beside it something that you have written on the same subject. Then lay it beside something a professional writer has written on the same subject—say in *Harpers*, or the *Atlantic Monthly*. You will learn how limited was the early structuralist affirmation that writing is simply symbolized speech. It may be no more than symbolized speech for the child learning to spell; it is almost "another language" for the mature writer.

D. The Written Language and Training in Logic

Finally, the school has an obligation to teach the kind of solid sense of logic which must lie behind any essay responsibly titled 'well-written.' We know something about the formation of children's logical habits which can help us as teachers of composition. The logic which elementary school students know—if Piaget is correct—is primarily an inductive and concrete logic. Their thought must begin with concrete objects and impose a logical order upon them; they do not begin with a series of hypothetical 'logical orders' in terms of which the seen can be expected to make sense:

> In one Piaget experiment, the subject was given a tubular spring affair with which a ball can be aimed and shot against the bank

of a billiard table. Targets were placed at various places on the table, and the subject was to try to hit them by rebounding the ball off the bank, i.e., by making a "one-cushion billiard." The subject was then questioned about his behavior and its observed results, the principal interest being whether, or to what extent he induced the law that the angle of incidence always equals the angle of reflection.

The concrete-operational subject (7-11 year old child, i.e. generally the elementary school child) appears limited in this situation to asserting concrete instances of the law and making practical use of these to shoot accurately; he cannot state it in its general form, *as a law*: Dom (9;9): "It hits here, then it goes there" (he points out the equal angles, repeating his phrase for different inclinations of the plunger). The adolescent, on the other hand, (i.e. junior and senior high child) is on the lookout for general principles from the beginning, and once he finds a likely candidate, he immediately thinks of putting it to experimental test in order to verify it.

Lam (15; 2): "The rebound depends upon the inclination (of the plunger). . . . Yes, it depends on the angle. I traced an imaginary line perpendicular (to the buffer): the angle formed by the target and the angle formed by the plunger with the imaginary line will be the same" (ibid., p. 13). There were two experiments which illustrated particularly well the adolescent's growing skill in scientific reasoning. In one, the problem was to discover the variables affecting how much a rod will bend under a given set of conditions. The materials and procedure were such that the child had the possibility of isolating five variables, each of which makes a separate causal contribution to the amount of bend: (1) the kind of metal of which the rod is made; (2) the amount of weight attached to its end; (3) the rod's length; (4) its thickness; and (5) its cross-section form (round, square, or rectangular). The adolescent makes good use of his talent for combinatorial operations in this situation. He begins by differentiating the above-mentioned variables as possible ones—ones which might have effects on rod flexibility—and then takes as his principal task that of finding out which of them really do have effects (in this particular problem it happens that they all do). He does this last by systematically trying most or all of the relevant variable-present, variable-absent combinations: that is, by varying thickness and holding the rest constant, varying cross-section form and holding the rest constant, etc. Although the younger child does discover some of these variables

> and does make crude attempts to test them, he is never able to prove their individual efficacy conclusively by rigorous, "all-other-thing-being-equal" method. The disposition to prove, and particularly to prove by varying one factor while holding all others constant, appears to be the prerogative of a formal-operational junior and senior high school thought structure.

When we ask elementary students to write plain non-fictional prose, we do not place before them any concrete series of things which they can examine and interpret in a logically coherent fashion. We do not ask them to examine inductively bits of language or pieces of literature manifesting similarities of form and pattern.

The elementary child in writing discursively must begin with a concrete situation. He tries to explore it looking at one aspect of it after another, searching for a generalization; the secondary school child begins looking at a situation by saying to himself, "What are the possible generalizations which could interpret this puzzling situation coherently?" That is, he starts with a grid of hypothetically possible explanations and then tests these out systematically so as to enable him to discover which generalizations the particular things before him instance. If Piaget's experiments mean anything for pedagogy as it is related to the development of the logical sense, they mean that our work with the junior or senior high students should begin with *their hypotheses* and then bring them face to face with the concrete phenomena of language or literature. If, for instance, they say that "words mean what the individual makes them mean," they should be asked to assign artificial meanings to conventional words and try them on strangers: i.e. people from outside the classroom. Strangers will not understand the words as they have made them mean but as they "mean conventionally" and the student will have to revise his hypothesis to account for the fact that words may have private associations but public meanings. The junior and senior high student as he studies and endeavors to interpret linguistic or literary phenomena should be asked to keep writing down his hypotheses in notebooks, revising and rehsaping them as he encounters their limitations. Indeed the formal study of logic may not help straight thinking anything like so much as encountering concrete situations, being asked to interpret them, seeing that one's interpretations do not accommodate them, and being forced to revise one's hypotheses in the face of a fellow student's objections to the way in which one has interpreted.

Since the student is persuaded that he has an accurate hypothesis

concerning what is going on in a situation, then he has to study how to get the logic of his interpretations across to his peers: "How can I control my language so that I say what makes sense?" This means learning to hear nonsense in what one writes. A student who says that "Capital punishment is one of the most *useless* ways of obtaining justice there is" has not heard the nonsense in the use of his word "useless." The categories of "useful" and "useless" do not apply to methods of administering justice: "Capital punishment is unjust," he could have said and made sense; "Capital punishment is immoral" he could have said and made sense; but not "Capital punishment is a *useless* way of obtaining justice"—as if the executioner could have said. "The state executed him and gave him his just deserts, but the execution didn't turn out to be as useful to the state as it had hoped.

Our handling of our office, teaching the 'written language,' should begin with our having children tell stories aloud in imitation of written stories. Children in the elementary school have a natural imitative capacity. If they are exposed to a broad range of the sources of the written language, they will imitate the patterns which they hear: the syntactic patterns, the lexicon, and the dialects. Recently my son asked me if he could tell me a story: he told a fable-like story of a porcupine and a turtle. Half way through the story, he discovered that his fable had an element of humour in it; it reminded him of an Uncle Remus tory. Without thinking, he fell into the dialect he had heard used in reading Uncle Remus stories. At the end of the story he looked pleased with himself and said: "You know, I told that story kind of like an Uncle Remus story." He had learned a form of the language which he could only encounter through the medium of print-interpreted-aloud; he had learned a dialect which only really existed as a printed idiom; and he had learned a story mode, and a mode of humour. One might without speaking irresponsibly assert that children learn both their early "lessons in written logic" and in the grammar of the written language from telling stories; for as they develop in their story-telling from telling purely episodic stories to telling tales in which episodes lead to one another, explain one another, cause one another, they develop the capacity to express a new logical sense governed by a necessity which does not appear in their early writing. The child in writing stories for his peers encounters in the most concrete of forms the problem of every writer, the problem of audience. If he writes a story, and reads it before other children, he either entertains or he does not entertain. He is either understood, or he is not understood. When he has not entertained his peers, he knows that he has failed. There is a moral to be found in the success which elementary teachers have in bringing chil-

dren to children as story tellers and audiences. The moral is a moral for secondary school teachers.

Our problem is not to "correct papers;" our problem is to bring our students in contact with their audiences and let the audiences make their judgments, without fake harshness or softness. If the student's spelling is bad, let his peers try to read his paper to see what they can make of his unconventional orthography: if it inhibits reading, the student will have lost his audience. If his thought is not coherent, let his peers discuss his thought—sentence by sentence. One cannot enforce writing norms which do not derive from an audience response; and, given a response, the norms are implicit. School writing is generally writing for no audience at all or writing for the audience of one teacher—writing done purely as a dummy run. The student records thoughts, which he has not thought and beliefs at which he has not arrived for men whom he knows not to care, and in a situation which he knows not to count. No one can be expected to learn to control the written language in such circumstances. Only when we understand what is our office will we abandon the abstract domains and also avoid doing what culture already does.

Our office is to teach the written language.

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